

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly, comprising:

a pair of rails, each of said pair of rails including a body portion and a detent portion, said detent portion including a cut-out on each side thereof, said cut-outs being generally symmetric with each other and forming a pair of hooks on each side of said detent portion,

wherein the cut-out on one side of said detent portion of each of said rails is for receiving a claw of the windshield wiper assembly and the hooks on the opposite side of the detent portion of each of the rails are for engaging a windshield wiper blade of the windshield wiper assembly, and

wherein the pair of hooks on one side of said detent portion extends outwardly from a top of said detent portion and the pair of hooks on the other side of said detent portion extends outwardly from a bottom of said detent portion.

2. (Original) The backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 1, wherein said detent portion includes at least a portion thereof which is decreased in thickness with respect to a thickness of said body portion.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim [[1]] 10, wherein the pair of hooks on one side of said detent portion is thicker than the pair of hooks on the other side of the detent portion.

5. (Currently Amended) The backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim [[3]] 1, wherein a first of said pair of rails ~~includes~~ can include the top hooks oriented toward a center of the windshield wiper blade and a second of said pair of rails ~~includes~~ can include the top hooks oriented away from the center of the windshield wiper blade such that the top hooks of the first rail overlap with the bottom hooks of the second rail when said pair of rails is mounted to the windshield wiper assembly.

6. (Currently Amended) The backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 4, wherein a first of said pair of rails ~~includes~~ can include the thicker hooks oriented toward a center of the windshield wiper blade and a second of said pair of rails ~~includes~~ can include the thicker hooks oriented away from center of the windshield wiper blade such that the thicker hooks of the first rail overlap with the thinner hooks of the second rail when said pair of rails is mounted to the windshield wiper assembly.

7. (Original) The backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 1, wherein said detent portion includes a central portion formed between said cut-outs and a width of said central portion is greater than a width of said body portion.

8. (Original) The backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 1, wherein each of said hooks has an internal edge formed by a respective cut-out which is non-perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of said body.

9. (Original) The backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 8, wherein said internal edge is formed at an angle of 85° or less with respect to the longitudinal direction of said body.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly ~~according to claim 1, assembly, comprising:~~

a pair of rails, each of said pair of rails including a body portion and a detent portion, said detent portion including a cut-out on each side thereof, said cut-outs being generally symmetric with each other and forming a pair of hooks on each side of said detent portion,

wherein the cut-out on one side of said detent portion of each of said rails is for receiving a claw of the windshield wiper assembly and the hooks on the opposite side of the detent portion of each of the rails are for engaging a windshield wiper blade of the windshield wiper assembly,
and

wherein said pair of hooks on one side of said detent portion is bent in an upward direction and said pair of hooks on the other side of said detent portion is bent in a downward direction.

11. (Currently Amended) A rail for a backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly, comprising:

a body portion and a detent portion, said detent portion including a cut-out on each side thereof, said cut-outs being generally symmetric with each other and forming a pair of hooks on each side of said detent portion,

wherein the cut-out on one side of said detent portion is for receiving a claw of the windshield wiper assembly and the hooks on the opposite side of the detent portion are for engaging a windshield wiper blade of the windshield wiper assembly, and

wherein the pair of hooks on one side of said detent portion extend outwardly from a top of said detent portion and the pair of hooks on the other side of said detent portion extends outwardly from a bottom of said detent portion.

12. (Original) The rail for a backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 11, wherein said detent portion includes at least a portion thereof which is decreased in thickness with respect to a thickness of said body portion.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) The rail for a backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim [[11]] 18, wherein the pair of hooks on one side of said detent portion is thicker than the pair of hooks on the other side of the detent portion.

15. (Original) The rail for a backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 11, wherein said detent portion includes a central portion formed between said cut-outs and a width of said central portion is greater than a width of said body portion.

16. (Original) The rail for a backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 11, wherein each of said hooks has an internal edge formed by the cut-out which is non-perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of said body.

17. (Currently Amended) The rail for a backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim ~~[[8]]~~ 16, wherein said internal edge is formed at an angle of 85° or less with respect to the longitudinal direction of said body.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A rail for a backing strip for a windshield wiper assembly according to claim 1, assembly, comprising:

a body portion and a detent portion, said detent portion including a cut-out on each side thereof, said cut-outs being generally symmetric with each other and forming a pair of hooks on each side of said detent portion,

wherein the cut-out on one side of said detent portion is for receiving a claw of the windshield wiper assembly and the hooks on the opposite side of the detent portion are for engaging a windshield wiper blade of the windshield wiper assembly, and

wherein said pair of hooks on one side of said detent portion is bent in an upward direction and said pair of hooks on the other side of said detent portion is bent in a downward direction.

19. (Canceled)

20. (New) A windshield wiper assembly, comprising:

a windshield wiper claw;

a windshield wiper blade; and

a pair of rails, each of said pair of rails including a body portion and a detent portion, said detent portion including a cut-out on each side thereof, said cut-outs forming a pair of hooks on each side of said detent portion, at least a portion of said detent portion being decreased in thickness with respect to said body portion,

wherein the pair of rails are oriented so that the hooks on one side of the detent portion of a first of the pair of rails extend outwardly from a top of the first rail to engage the windshield wiper claw and the hooks on one side of the detent portion of a second of the pair of rails extend outwardly from a bottom of the second rail to engage the windshield wiper claw.

21. (New) The windshield wiper assembly according to claim 20, wherein the pair of rails are oriented so that the hooks on a second side of the detent portion of the first rail extend inwardly from a top of the first rail to engage the windshield wiper blade and the hooks on a

second side of the detent portion of the second rail extend inwardly from a bottom of the second rail to engage the windshield wiper blade.